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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 002073

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DEPT FOR SCA/FO DAS GASTRIGHT, SCA/A
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN
OSD FOR SHIVERS
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A. CG CJTF-82 POLAD

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SUBJECT: EXPLORING WAYS TO MAKE PTS A MORE SUCCESSFUL
PROGRAM

Classified By: Ambassador William Wood for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

SUMMARY

¶1. (C//REL UK) The Program Tahkim-e-Solh (PTS) process has reconciled 3,742 former combatants since being established in May 2005, but needs to be strengthened. Recent developments - a more solid funding base and stronger Afghan leadership - provide an opportunity to make this happen. Embassy is focusing on how to enhance: outreach and contact with potential reconcilees, debriefing, monitoring, and benefits as well as obligations of the reconcilee. Post will work with Afghan leadership and also with potential donors to ensure elements are covered and supported. End Summary.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN FUNDING AND LEADERSHIP

¶2. (S//REL UK) Ongoing Funding: Beginning on or about July 1, the PTS Commission will have, for the first time, a stable funding source from the US (through USAID ESF funds) and UK. The US will pay \$150,000/month to cover operating expenses (rent, salaries, and utilities) for the eleven field offices (average \$7,400/month) and the central office. The UK will channel an additional \$50,000/month toward reconcilee-related expenses, to include food, housing, and transport to/from Kabul for selected reconcilees, and other non-operating costs that may arise. The balance of the UK funds, \$1.9 million, will fund information operations/outreach (detailed in Para 10).

¶3. (SBU) Additional Funding/New Initiatives: The Dutch have recently committed to fund the Uruzgan office (approximately \$90,000/year) and contribute an additional \$108,920 to fund information operations/outreach in that province. The Canadians are also interested in supporting the program, perhaps by "adopting" the Kandahar field office. The Danes (\$100,000) and Japanese have expressed interest in

funding enhanced elements of the program. This includes vocational training, ideally through a mechanism that leverages an existing training program.

14. (C//REL UK) Leadership: The ONSC officially retains governmental oversight for PTS, but Professor Mojaddedi operates with relative autonomy as Chairman of the independent PTS Commission. In April, Professor Mojaddedi named his eldest son, Dr. Najibullah Mojaddedi, Deputy Chairman (unpaid). Dr. Najibullah, a medical doctor who practiced for over ten years in Florida and most recently worked for the WHO, brings management experience and a much needed focus on accountability and transparency. He replaces a Chief of Staff whose motivations, follow-through, and integrity were questioned by many in the international community. There has been a positive change in the demeanor and activities of the PTS Commission since his appointment to include: no-notice inspections of field offices, removal of two heads of field offices for incompetence, and position descriptions/contracts for each PTS employee.

THE PTS PROCESS: HOW IT WORKS

15. (C//REL UK) An individual who wishes to participate in PTS may apply, in person or via an intermediary, to one of the eleven field offices (Paktia, Kunar, Nangarhar, Herat, Kunduz, Kandahar, Khost, Zabul, Farah, Helmand, and Uruzgan) or central office in Kabul. Each potential reconcilee must have a

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"sponsor" - a local tribal elder, government official, or cleric - who will vouch for that individual and commit to monitoring him after he has PTS'd. After a candidate applies, the field office initiates a background check. Depending on the individual's background, the ONSC and PTS Commission may become involved. A few selected candidates rise to the attention of the President.

16. (C//Rel UK) A candidate accepted into the program receives an official certificate of reconciliation from the PTS program. He is invited to one of the field offices or the central office to take a written and oral loyalty oath (see Para 7) and may be selected, based on his position, for an intelligence interview and debriefing. He then is encouraged to return to his village and pursue productive employment as a contributing member of his tribe and community. After taking the PTS pledge, if the reconcilee is suspected of association with, aiding, or fighting alongside current insurgents, or of committing other crimes, he is subject to arrest, detention, interrogation and judicial prosecution by the proper Afghan authorities.

17. (U) Reconcilee Pledge: I, _____, Son of _____, pledge to be loyal to the Government of Afghanistan, to abide by the constitution and other laws of the country, and not to undertake any activity, military or non-military, against the interests of the government and people of Afghanistan.

18. (S//NF) The PTS Plus program also exists as an extension of the PTS program. PTS Plus is utilized for a high-level enemy combatant that is in US custody when either GOA or senior Coalition leaders wish to initiate his release and he is not deemed releasable by the Enemy Combatant Review Board. We expect no change to this program.

¶9. (C//REL UK) The PTS process needs to give combatants more information about the program and easier access to it. There needs to be stronger debriefing procedures, greater coordination with provincial leaders, and post-reconciliation involvement of and follow-up by sponsors.

¶10. (S//REL UK) Information Operations/Outreach: Posters, leaflets, and TV and radio advertisements in Dari and Pashtu, which extol the virtues of PTS and reconciliation, are elements of the communications campaign that "markets" PTS.

¶11. (S//NF) Access Points: Some potential reconcilees reportedly feel uncomfortable approaching a PTS field office or the central office because of perceived allegiances on the part of leadership or concerns about their personal safety. As recently as last week, 50 sub-commanders approached UNAMA through an intermediary because they did not believe they could work safely through the PTS office in Kandahar.

¶12. (S//NF) Debriefing: Only about 5% of reconcilees are systematically debriefed. Information gathered from debriefings is not generally actionable intelligence, but could include data on relationships, links, and past activities of anti-government efforts. Debriefers are available for recontact by reconcilees, which, in some instances, yields further intelligence.

¶13. (C//REL UK) Monitoring: Elders are supposed to monitor reconcilees and NDS may conduct some ongoing monitoring, but it is not a coherent program element. A more formal elder reporting program and a more routinized comparison of PTS and police arrest lists

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are options we are exploring.

¶14. (C//REL UK) Benefits for the reconcilee: No formal PTS financial assistance, land grant, or job training is currently available. International partners are likely to take the lead in this area. Giving reconcilees access to existing vocational training programs could help reconcilees reintegrate. We are exploring how to improve and expand training for PTS staff, some of which is already planned for via USAID in the area of financial management.

¶15. (C//REL UK) Obligations of the Reconcilee: We will attempt to identify the optimal mix of benefit and obligation so that potential reconcilees are not deterred.

WOOD